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ommunist Faith and Christian Witness

by LESTER DE KOSTER*

A few years ago there appeared ook by Mr. Whittaker Chambers d *Witness*. It was widely adver- l and probably widely read. By critics it was variously appraised. some it seemed little less than ustine or Dostoevsky; for others it ed little more than moonshine. Dos Passos heralded it as *the* book ur generation; one of his colleagues- riticism dubbed it the best fiction he year.

r. Chambers chose his striking title berately, he says, to stress that both nd Alger Hiss were *witnesses*; wit- es, each to one of the two antitheti- faiths which dominate the twentieth ury: Christianity and Communism. of his long drawn tale of intrigue treason, Mr. Chambers emerges at as a kind of St. George who van- shes the red dragon before the se Committee on Un-American ivities.

erhaps it is only after the volume been laid aside that one begins to der if, as protagonists of these two agonistic ways of life, either combat- really rings true. On the one hand, atever may have been Mr. Hiss's vate avocations, as a public 'witness' Communism he proved less than lix in its defence. Naught had he, eed, but bitter denial of all that less ed comrades did not fear to pro-

claim from soap-box and printing press. On the other hand, were Rome, the National Council, or the Christian Reformed Church seeking ways to delineate Christianity to contemporary America, they might well have hesitated to endorse Mr. Chambers' scarcely defined and fluctuating presentation of it.

In short, Hiss witnessed to Communism largely out of the mouth of Chambers, one he had once looked into with a distaste which never left him; and Chambers witnessed to a Christianity so vague in content as to be meat for everyman — or none; while what of St. Augustine there is to be discerned in his many pages exists largely in Mr. Dos Passos' imagination.

Witness is really the determined effort by one party to the 'Hiss Case' to substantiate his side of the argument, but it may incidentally have drawn wide nominal attention to an issue to which less popular works had long 'witnessed' far more profoundly, the issue namely: Christianity or Communism.

Among others, both Protestant and Catholic, Christopher Dawson in his *Religion and the Modern State*, Jacques Maritain in his *True Humanism*, and Pope Pius XI in his encyclical letter of March 19, 1937, *Atheistic Communism*, had stressed the ultimate opposition between Christian and Communist ways of life. His objective, wrote the Pope, was ". . . to inculcate anew, and with greater insistence, the means by which Christian civilization, the true *civitas humana*, can be saved from the satanic scourge, and not merely saved, but better developed for the well-being of human society."

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Communist Faith and Christian Witness —Continued

The question rises with renewed insistence out of the turmoil of today: is it true that for the sons of the twentieth century there open but two ultimate ways? and are they, then, mutually exclusive ways?

Something there is that sounds familiar in it. Was it not ever so? God or Mammon; Creator or creature? One Who said, "Ye cannot serve two masters . . ." and another who demanded, "Choose ye this day . . .," or another who tempted, "Ye shall be as gods . . ." May these now be drawn thus: Christ or Marx?

* * *

To begin with: there is, deep in each life and deep in history, ulitmate allegiance to one of two antithetical kingdoms: God's or Satan's. Only the "fool" can have it otherwise. Were men as God, the nature and the adherents of these two distinct monarchies could be clearly and unequivocally discerned, the wheat easily distinguished from the tares. But men, even Christian men — why say it? — are not as God. For men, then, the rigorous dichotomizing of temporal existence is hazardous if not arrogant. Our Lord says plainly that on the 'youngest' day some will find with surprise that they have served Him better than they knew: "Lord, when . . .?" and others will find to their consternation that they have erred: "Lord, did we not . . .?" For, in the enormously complex patterns of daily life, basic committments which are antithetical in the sight of God assume such myriad forms and relations that human judgment is baffled and learns the wisdom of God in reserving final judgment to Himself alone. Thus, to the men of this era as to the men of all eras, instead of two distinct alternatives, there seem to open a way and ways and a way; and many indeed there be who would stoutly resist drawing all options to these: Christ or Marx. And however convinced one may be that ultimately this is the case, the kind of reasoning which might be employed to force such dissenters to formal conformity to these alternatives would inevitably fail to take account of what were to them real, significant, and consequential distinctions which point in other directions. How appropriately they would recall: "There is more in heaven and earth, Horatio, than is dreamed of in your philosophy." Indeed. Straining the rich stuff of daily history through the thin sieve of a neat classification may be interesting, even delusive of accomplishment, but much of reality is removed in the process.

On the other hand, though it may be impossible to narrow *all* apparent option to these two, Communism or Christianity, yet no one doubts that for much of the modern world these are the two livest of options, each demanding total commitment. The challenge which has always come to the Church in one form or another comes today in the form of Marxian Communism. It is useful to know it well.

* * *

So reckless are men with their means of communication that the word 'Communism' has ceased to have very precise significance. It is used in these times to designate Marxism or any other position somewhat left, to borrow a phrase from Edward R. Murrow, of Louis XIV. But authentic Marxian Communism is a fully developed, highly sophisticated *weltanschauung*, which, like Christianity, can be brought to bear upon the day-to-day living of the humblest or the highest in the land. It is esoteric enough to absorb the energies of a genius like Lenin, and simple enough to fire the enthusiasm of a Russian kindergarten. It is idealistic enough to evoke sacrifice to the death and realistic enough to value the full stomach. It is the unintentional but sedulous ape of Christianity, to which none-the-less it stands in opposition at every point. Communism is the full-fledged religion of man, the creature's neatest counterfeit of the true religion of his Creator.

* * *

Technically, Marxism views all history as the ceaseless struggle between two opposing classes. These classes are defined and take their form from the fact that the one, which is small, owns the means and methods of production; while the other, which is large, has naught but its labor to call its own. At one stage in history these classes define themselves as slave an master, at another as serf and lord, an today as proletariat (workers) an bourgeoisie (capitalists). Betwee these two classes there is no common in terest, and tensions grow and deepe The state, the church, and all other in stitutions take their characteristic form in any period from the efforts of th possessors to subdue the dispossessed The state, for example, is, according t Marx, no more than an arm of th bourgeoisie for the purpose of enforc ing their claims to property; the churc exists solely to promise rewards in a ter life as a drug to those who migh otherwise demand more now; educa tion is designed to pervert the minds o the young to bourgeois values; and s on.

History, Marx believed, has now en tered upon its final pre-millenial phase The proletariat will one day rise in re volt, under the leadership of a few rene gades from their oppressors, and set u a dictatorship for the purpose of ruth lessly exterminating all vestiges of th bourgeois order. At last none will re main but adherents of the new regime they will all equally *own* and equall *work* the means of production. Whe owners and workers are one, there wil be no basis for class distinction, an hence no struggle. Each will contrib ute to the common store according t

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ability, and receive from it accord- to his need. The state will wither y, the church no longer be neces-, and education will be fitted to ends. The arts will flourish, and hort the millenium will have come, earth and in time. All this, for the xist, is inevitable, guaranteed by dialectic of history.

* * *

COMPARE this with Christianity. the Marxist, history as we know egan when man first set himself nst his neighbor by claiming prop- in capital; for the Christian, his- as we know it began when man set himself against God by dis- ing His command. This dispen- n ends, for the Marxist, when men ess all material things in common; nds for the Christian when men itually possess God to enjoy Him ver, or are eternally alienated from . For the Marxist, the millennium shered in by cataclysm when the essed rise up in violent judgment their oppressors; for the Chris-, the millennium is ushered in by clysm when God sits in judgment mankind. The Marxist sees the age coming in time, brought about his own efforts and yet guaranteed he materialist dialectic; the Chris- sees the new age coming beyond , brought about through the grace God which informs his own efforts, guaranteed by God's counsel. The amic of history, for Marx, is strug- between owner and worker; for Christian, the dynamic of history he struggle between Christ's and n's. Evil for the Marxist is defined the economic organization of soci- for the Christian, it is defined by law of God. For Marx the indi- ual does not matter; for the Chris-, the individual has eternal signifi- e. For Marx the system makes men ; for the Christian, the bad men e bad systems. For Marx salva- is, then, by a change of system; for Christian, it is by a change of heart. eism is an integral element of Marx- ; God is the heart of Christianity.

Christianity and Communism are in systematic and irreconcilable osition from root to branch. Like magnets their lines of force extend nd the globe and pattern the travail istory, drawing and repelling. The ithesis between them is clear and prehensive. No one who knows what he is about can seek to combine them. Always and at all points, genuine Christian witness and Communist dogma stand in diametric opposition. This opposition entails certain considerations of which three are worthy of attention.

* * *

1. The Christian's unremitting opposition to the theoretical and the practical aspects of Communism implies also his critique of those conditions and those thought-patterns which foster it. If, for example, his consideration of Communist doctrine suggests that Communism is the legitimate child of classical Liberalism, the Christian may well add this to his other grounds for criticizing Liberal doctrines and the practices based upon them. If his observation of current history suggests that Communism thrives readily where there is oppression, want, and despair, the Christian adds this fact also to his own valid reasons for seeking amelioration of such conditions, at home and abroad. His opposition to Communism is therefore persistent, consistent, and all-embracing.

2. The Christian needs to take care, however, that he does not identify himself with everything the Communist opposes. Communism, it must be recalled, is professionally in opposition to the *status quo* in every land it does not already dominate. Every flaw discernible in the present order is so much grist for the Communist mill. With a vigor and dedication worthy of higher ends, the Marxist denounces day and night the injustices and inequities he observes in any order—and his observation is keen. Does the Asiatic or the African native rebel against real and imagined evils of colonial imperialism? The Communist becomes his spokesman, and where he can, his leader. Are the Chinese restive under weak administration and suspicious of favored nation concessions? Are they hungry for land and for bread? The Communist, as we have seen, adopts their cause, enlists their energies, exploits their grievances, takes at last their country and paliates his tyranny with distribution of confiscated estates. In short, are men anywhere in the world oppressed, in want, ill housed, thinly clad, longing for recognition and equality? The Communist appears as their champion. Skillfully he deepens their sense of betrayal, and deftly he sketches his utopia. Where there is unrest, he is ready to stir it; where there is frustration, he opens an avenue for action; where there is darkness of spirit, he easily dons the raiment of an angel of light. That all this leads at last to a tyranny unparalleled in the modern world, that the shining utopia is forged finally in chains and slavery, is not discerned by many until the special police roam the streets and the firing squad deals decisively with dissent. How sobering, and how challenging it is that all over the world men are choosing goals so unsubstantial and a philosophy so false in preference to Christianity. Let the Christian meet that challenge with chastened sobriety and flaming invocation. Let him by word and deed erect by God's grace a standard to which men will from all lands repair.

For where there is oppression, injustice, poverty, disease, and the blighting of the human spirit by remediable ills, the Christian is vitally concerned, far more radically indeed than ever the Marxist can be. At stake, the Christian knows, is not only an economic or social order, significant as these are in history, but eternal souls made by God and restless for Him alone. And within history, the Christian objective is more than a society patterned after human hands; he builds toward one redeemed to good works by the love of one Creator. Bitter denunciation of greed, of selfishness, of hatred and its fruits did not first echo in 19th century Germany, but rather in the long prophetic tradition which culminated in first century Palestine. The authentic challenge to injustice is not that of Marx, but that of Jesus. The chaotic world listens more desperately than it knows for the clear voice which Christianity alone can speak not only against the delusion of Communist utopia, but equally against the myriad evils upon which Communism feeds. More than that, the world waits more eagerly than it knows for the challenge of the *civitas dei* with roots in God, branches in time, and fruits in eternity which only Christianity can fling before it, and compared to which the Communist sham disintegrates and fades away.

If, in these matters, the initiative seems today to have fallen into false hands, as Toynbee and others declare, it has been by gross Christian default. Neither the basis, nor the dynamic, nor the end of Communism is rooted in reality, but like all evil it feeds upon the

good it defies and yet mimics. The answer to it must needs be forged in this century, in terms so clear and unmistakable that no man may be with excuse. To do so doing the Christian is called to dedicate himself anew at each day's dawning.

But this dedication and the action consequent upon it must be made with care and discrimination. By the irony of history, in his struggle against the false gods of Communism, the Christian finds himself seemingly (and perhaps for some, actually) defending the evils which the Communist so accurately descries; and, on the other hand, by setting himself vigorously against the evils of his time, the Christian makes seeming common cause with the voice of Communism. He cannot escape the dilemma by simplicism or violent denunciation of 'isms.' He is not 'for' whatever the Communist is against, or against whatever the Communist is 'for,' except in the light of a large and complex context. His problem is to make perfectly clear to himself and to the world that while stringently opposing the most articulate and world-wide challenge the Church has ever engaged, he none-the-less repudiates on grounds of his own any alliance with those evils which the Communist discerns and denounces so ably.

3. In so doing the Christian must beware that he is neither frightened into silence by those who are determined to identify all social witness with Communism, nor made the unwitting victim of the demagogue who blurs distinctions to ends of his own. It is a challenge of our times that the Christian who seriously concerns himself with the social and economic implications of his faith may become the target of those who in ignorance or in malice confuse Christian and Communist witness. In defence, the Christian rests upon the real and ultimate distinction between his own position and the Communist's, which, rooted as it is in the counsel of his Father can be ignored by others only at their peril.

The parallels between Christian and Communist witness are sometimes *apparently* very real. For example, the aspiration of colonial peoples for self-government may evoke Christian support in an effort to embody the ends of justice in political forms; and it may receive equally active Communist support in an effort to establish a Communist regime and gain Communist adherents. The Christian may endorse F. E. P. C. legislation in response to his doctrine of man; the Communist may endorse it to point up social tensions and develop minority-group following. The Christian may oppose the methods of some Congressional investigators as subversive of civil liberties; the Communist may as vigorously oppose them to protect himself and to exploit confusion. The Communist may employ the Fifth Amendment as a shield; the Christian may accept even this abuse in order to protect inviolate the basic and essential principle that Amendment embodies.

To the Christian these *seeming* identities will be chastening and instructive. From them he learns by hard experience that *seeming* identity is not necessarily *real* identity, and that a *seeming* identity is therefore in itself no evidence of Communist commitment; he learns that others may take positions which seemingly parallel Communism or Christianity without being genuinely committed to either.

To the demagogue, on the other hand, bent as he is on ends of his own, these parallels offer an irresistible opportunity to scorch the innocent as he brands the guilty. Training his sights unerringly on the undiscriminating, the insecure, and the ill-informed, he glibly puts it thus: The Communist endorses, or opposes, such-and-such a measure; *so does* Citizen X. *Therefore*, Citizen X *must* be: 1) a Communist, or 2) a dupe, or 3) a fellow-traveler, a class with highly elastic boundaries. These alternatives, the full-fledged demagogue makes it very clear, are the only ones open to Citizen X; the full-fledged 'undiscriminator' thinks he understands perfectly.

But not so the Christian. The Ninth Commandment imposes upon him inescapable obligations to reality. He has no freedom of choice in what he will call real or unreal; he can only be *obedient* to what is true of the world and all its relations as they are sustained by God. To bear false witness against the real is sin. Therefore it is not within his province to choose what he will call Citizen X. What Citizen X *really* is, and *really* stands for, is known to God and, as a part of reality, sustained by Him. It is for the Christian to ascertain with care and accuracy what is really true of Citizen X and then to witness to that truth. If such determination cannot be made with accuracy, the Christian is obliged to keep silence and to recommend it to others like him. The voice of true sanity in these times of accusation and counter-accusation must be that of the Christian who knows that whatever *is*, whatever is true, is sustained by God, and that *therefore* misrepresentation, distortion, and insinuation are in violation of God's command. The Christian is neither in the van nor in the train of those who follow the demagogue in his blurring, abusing and subverting of real difference. Christianity obliges obedience. Obedience to reality is truth.

Moreover, the Christian does not live alone. How memorably Donne put it:

> "No man is an Iland, intire of itselfe; every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the maine. If a clod bee washed away by the Sea Europe is the lesse, as well as if

"We lift up our eyes to the future, but not because we are getting more and more tired of this world. The future is not an asylum for tired people who do not want to work any longer. Sometimes we may become tired. And sometimes the Church no longer has patience with the wicked world. But the Lord still has patience, just as he had patience more than Jonah when he asked for the final judgment over the wicked city of Nineveh."
—G. C. Berkouwer in *Modern Uncertainty and the Christian Faith*

'romontorie were, as well as if a Mannor of thy friends or thine owne were; any man's death diminishes ne, because I am involved in Mankinde; And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it olls for thee."

he bell tolls when a public representative identifies without proof a ld-renowned scholar as the "top iet agent" in the country; the bell when a distinguished Methodist op is charged, without subsequent of, with serving God on Sunday and x on weekdays; the bell tolls when s publicly charged that "the Comist Party has enlisted the support t least 7,000 Protestant clergymen ." though the accuser confesses on vision he cannot name a handful uch party-members under oath. The tolls when any citizen, great or ible, is accused without proof, or med by insinuation. The Christian not evade his corporate responsibilfor these things, except he demand the evidence be clear and unmisible or the accuser be brought to ount.

s vigorous as is his opposition to mmunism just because it is a lie, so rous must be the Christian's opition to every other lie. About this has not choice but obligation. To rt of any man that he *is* what he *ot*, or to condone the so doing by eone else, is personal or corporate ation of the clear command of God. ere the charge of Communism is , no opposition is more stalwart n that rooted in the Scriptures; ere the charge is falsely made, no ner demand for honor and honesty be heard than that of the Christian.

* * *

Let us, in these times, as rchill urged his countrymen in the k days of 1940, "brace ourselves to duty," diligently seeking to unravel tangled strands of force and countorce which encompass our era, se- in our convictions, forthright in witness, unremitting in our opposin to the idols of Communism, pointever by word and by deed to that rce of charity without which no soty can be made whole and no man ieve the end for which he was made.

Calvin and the Lord's Supper

by LEWIS B. SMEDES*

A criticism of Protestant theology flowing from Roman Catholic circles in recent years provides an occasion for some self-examination. This criticism has to do with the union of the Christian with Christ. It contends that the Reformed mind has no place within itself for a *real* union of the believer with Christ. It emanates from the so-called "new theology" associated with certain French theologians who have been much in the center of Catholic affairs lately, and has its roots in a re-emphasis within Catholicism of the doctrine of the "Body of Christ." In contrast to Catholic thought, say these theologians, Reformed theology does not recognize the real union of the Body with Christ the Head, and fails therewith to allow for the real union of the individual with Christ. Emile Mersch, for example, says that Protestantism allows only for a relationship of separation between Christ and the believer.[1] J. M. Congar says that this doctrine of separation is the essence and fundamental error of Protestantism.[2] Henri de Lubac adds that this leaves Protestantism with only a secular institution for a church whose spiritual life is found only in the abstract ideal of an invisible organism.[3] The same criticism finds an echo in Anglo-Catholic E. L. Mascall, who says that the absence of a real union of the Christian with Christ is the result of the Reformed doctrine of justification which, he says, leaves the Christian untouched by the reality of Christ's life. It is a fiction; man has only a make-believe righteousness. He is not really given the sanctifying life of the Savior. Given this fiction, there is no place for reality, the reality of participation in Christ and the renewal of human life through a share in His glorified life.[4]

We shall not be concerned here to expose the error in the thought behind this criticism. Suffice it to say that it is rooted in an unbiblical notion of man's destiny, of the deification of the humanity of Christ, and of the capacity of finite man to share in this deification. What we shall do is investigate whether such a Reformed theologian as Calvin was open to such a polemic as that here suggested.

There is no better place to look than in his doctrine of the Lord's Supper. For to Calvin the sacrament of communion was not a doctrine apart from others. In it we can see implications of his doctrines of justification, of the work of the Holy Spirit, of the person and work of Christ, and of the function of human faith. He brings all of these themes into play in his discussion of the Lord's Supper. And the sacrament cannot be understood independent of them.

In order to understand Calvin's view of the sacrament of communion, we must recall one central point about his doctrine of justification. It is this: there is no justification of the sinner without his real and intimate, though mystical, union with the whole divine-human Mediator. After he finishes his treatment on the objective mediatorial work of Christ on earth, Calvin states as a fundamental principle: "as long as there is a separation between Christ and us, all that he suffered and performed for the salvation of mankind is useless and unavailing to us. To communicate to us what he received from his Father, he must, therefore, become ours, and dwell within us."[5] Whenever we think of Calvin's doctrine of imputed righteousness, this should qualify it. The believer has no righteousness of *any* sort, imputed or imparted, without a real union with the Savior. Calvin's language on this could hardly be any more realistic. "Christ," he says, "is not without us, but dwells within us; and not only adheres to us by an indissoluble fellowship, but by a certain wonderful communion coalesces daily more and more into one body with us, till he becomes altogether one with us."[6]

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*Dr. Smedes, who has recently returned from several years of graduate study in Amsterdam and Oxford, is now student chaplain at Urbana-Champaign, Illinois.

1. *Le Corps Mystique du Christ*, Louvain, 1933, II, 263.
2. *Chretiens Desunis*, Paris, 1937, p. 112.
3. *Catholicisme*, Paris, 1938. p. 45.
4. *Christ, the Christian, and the Church*, London, 1946, pp. 112f.
5. *Institutes* III, i, 1.
6. *Ibid.*, ii, 24.

Calvin and the Lord's Supper — Continued

It is to be noted that it is the person of Christ, considered as a whole, to whom we are united and of whose life we become partakers. This is important for the subjects of justification and the Lord's Supper. It is also relevant to the person and work of Christ. We are not merely given certain benefits which He earned through His work; we are given Himself—really given, so that He becomes one with us as we share His life. He "makes us partakers not only of all his benefits, but also of himself," says Calvin.[7] Why is this? It is because there is no real distinction anymore between Christ and the benefits of salvation which He earned. When the Father granted to Christ the great treasure of righteousness, holiness, and sanctification, He did not give them to Him as a paymaster hands out a paycheck. These benefits were not simply put into Christ's possession, while remaining unintegral to His own person. All the righteousness and holiness and sanctification that Christ won are part of His own self. Even as there is no separation between His person and His work on earth, so there is no separation between His person and the rewards of His work in heaven. If we are to have the benefits of Christ, if we are to have Christ's salvation, really and truly, as part of our own selves, then we must have Christ Himself. This is why there is no justification apart from mystical union. This is why there is no participation in Christ's righteousness without real participation in the very life of Christ. The point is that there *is* a real participation in the very life of the resurrected Savior; it is a mystical participation, but real—just as real as if a piece of flesh from Christ's nail-pierced hand were cut off and engrafted by surgery upon my own. And this participation is the life blood of the Christian.

THIS participation in Christ is granted "more illustriously" in the Lord's Supper than anywhere else. Calvin takes Christ's words concerning his own flesh as referring to the eating of bread and drinking of wine in the sacrament: "For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father; so he who eats me will live because of me."[8] Some commentators say that by eating His flesh and drinking His blood Christ means believing in Him. Calvin does not go along with this. He sees something more. Of course, there is no eating of Christ's flesh apart from faith; but the eating is more the result of, than it is identical with, faith. When the Lord called Himself the bread of life, says Calvin, He "intended not only to teach that salvation is laid up for us in the faith of his death and resurrection, but also that, by our real participation of him, his life is transferred to us, and becomes ours."[9] Faith leads to a reality other than itself. What is this reality? It is a participation in the very divine-human life of Christ. "Christ," Calvin quotes Chrysostom as saying, "makes us his body not only by faith, but also in reality."[10] Christ and we become one body *through* faith, but the result is more than the possession of *faith*; it is the possession of *reality*. At this point Calvin becomes so realistic that one wants to draw back. He reminds one sometimes of the Greek fathers; one could place statements of Calvin and Athanasius side by side and not know who had written which. Even the modern Catholics are no more realistic in their language than this:

> *God did not choose to have life hidden, and, as it were buried within himself, and therefore he poured it into his Son, that it might flow to us.*[11]

It is as though a picture is drawn of God pouring His own divine life into Christ, and Christ relaying that life through His humanity into us. This is the language of the mystic realist. But to Calvin the life of the Savior which we receive is always that life crucified for our sins and raised for our justification. And without this fact the union would be of no avail. This is one thing that makes Calvin's view of the real union different from that of Catholics like Mersch and Mascall.

7. *Ibid.*

8. John 6:55-57.
9. *Institutes*, IV, xvii, 5.
10. *Ibid.*
11. Commentary on John 5:26.

In the Lord's Supper, as understood by Calvin, then, we may expect to find a real impartation of Christ, of His humanity—His flesh and blood—as well as of His divinity; of His body as well as of His spirit. "Christ himself," writes Calvin, "is the matter or substance of the sacred supper."

WHEN FIRST approaching Calvin's treatment, however, we find it difficult to relate the real participation in the humanity and divinity of Christ precisely to the actual partaking of the sacrament. This is because Calvin first treats the sacrament as a sign. Now, a sign is that which signifies something other than itself. It must have something in itself which is analogous to the thing signified, but it points away from itself to that thing. The thing which Calvin speaks of most significantly as the symbolizing analogy is the eating and drinking of the elements on the part of the celebrants. (The breaking of the bread and pouring of the wine are secondary with Calvin.) This fits in, of course, with his insistence on the real participation in Christ, the real eating of His flesh and drinking of His blood. So the eating of bread and drinking of wine is the symbol or analogy of eating His flesh and drinking His blood—of sharing in His humanity life, His divine-human life. The eating of bread is the visible symbol of an invisible eating of Christ; or, it is the material symbol of a spiritual eating. How this works is rather plain. As bread nourishes us and preserves our physical life, so His body nourishes our spiritual lives. And as wine nourishes, refreshes, and exhilarates, so with His blood.

In this, Calvin loses none of his realism concerning our participation in Christ, but does not yet relate this participation directly to the sacrament. So far we have a sign. We also have a seal. As the rainbow confirms God's promise concerning floods, the sign of the sacramental eating confirms God's promise concerning our participation in Christ. But the rainbow holds back no water; it only puts a visible seal on God's promise. So, it would seem, the sacrament is a visible seal of God's promise in Christ concerning our share in Him. But does it *effectuate* this par-

ation? Up to this point, it would not. The symbol points away itself *to* the reality. The symbol *res* us of Christ's promise; but the nise is *effected* independently of the ool.

YET CALVIN does not let it rest his. Christ, human and divine, is separate from the eating of the d and drinking of the wine. To be He is not locally confined to the d. The material substance of His does not migrate from heaven to ce the substance of the bread. Yet, sign of His body and blood is not an ordinary sign; and the seal is an ordinary seal. The sacrament sign and seal in that it points the to a reality other than itself and rms God's promise to us of the ty. But it is a special kind of sign seal in that through it the reality is ally effectuated. The bread and are *effective* symbols. A most real cipation in Christ's flesh and blood tually effectuated in the eating and king of bread and wine. The ful- ent of the promise is made to oc- along with the confirmation of it. "testifies and seals," says Calvin, not by "the exhibition of a vain or ectual sign." With the giving of symbol, we may infer the giving of substance. Calvin writes:

> If it be true that the visible sign is n to us to seal the donation of the sible substance, we ought to enter- a confident assurance, that *in iving the symbol of his body, we at same time truly receive the body f.*"[12]

ence, all that Calvin writes so glow- y about our participation in Christ's ne-human life takes place in the bration of the sacrament. This is Christ is the substance of the sac- ent. He is truly given with the el- nts, though he is not confined to n. There is a real, substantial, bod- presence of Christ.

here are two highly important qual- tions, however. The first is that we t not mean by this a derogation of heavenly glory, as in Roman Cath- olic transubstantiationism. The second is that we must not spoil Christ's true humanity, as is done in the ubiquity notion of the old Lutheranism. Granted these, Calvin is ready to use any language that "may serve to express the true and substantial communication of the body and blood of the Lord, which is given to believers under the sacred symbols of the supper; and to express it in a manner implying not a mere reception of it in the imagination or apprehension of the mind, but a real enjoyment of it as the food of eternal life."[13] In other words, we do not hold the flesh of Christ in our mouths as the Romanists would have it. Yet in eating and drinking, the flesh and blood of Christ is truly imparted to us. Hence we get such statements as: "In the sacred supper, we acknowledge it a miracle, transcending both nature and our understanding, that Christ's life is made common to us with Himself, and His flesh is given to us as aliment."[14] Again, there is a "sacred communication of his flesh and blood, by which Christ transfuses his life into us, just as if he penetrated our bones and marrow."[15] And this communication is accomplished with the sacrament. The sacrament, then, points to a reality other than itself; yet even as it points, the reality is effected and we are mysteriously fed with the body of Christ.

WHY should Calvin be so concerned with saying that we eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ? First, because it is a simple biblical truth, surely an intensely rewarding and edifying one. Second, because the flesh of Christ is endowed with the fullness of life. Here Calvin becomes almost Eastern in his emphasis (which could mean that the Easterners had hold of a truth, though they tended to make it the whole truth) in saying: "the fullness of life dwelt in his humanity, that whoever partook of his flesh and blood might, at the same time, enjoy a participation of his life." The flesh of Christ is a fountain "which receives the life flowing from the divinity, and conveys it to us. Now, who does not see that a participation of the body and blood of Christ is necessary to all who aspire to heavenly life?"[16]

This is breathtaking language. Bold talk. It reminds one of Augustine, Athanasius, Chrysostom and Irenaeus. But it reminds one too of Paul and of Jesus Himself. It is the type of language which Prof. Bultman calls "mythological," expressive of a discredited world-view, and a needless offense to the modern mind; it is the type of "myth" of which he would rid the gospel. Perhaps we too find it difficult to take seriously; the notion that we should *really* partake of the life of Christ seems incredible. And in thinking thus, we have perhaps unwittingly fallen into Prof. Bultman's trap, we have allowed our scientifically oriented minds to determine what is credible. Perhaps, without realizing it, we have ourselves been engaged at this point in "demythologizing" the New Testament. One wonders too whether we today have lost the theological nerve to talk the language of Paul, Augustine, and Calvin. One wonders whether we have at this point gotten out of touch with the wholeness and fullness of Reformation theology. Can we have been so occupied with the essential truth of objective justification that we have neglected the other side of the coin, that of real and mystical union with Christ. The Reformers were big enough to see and hold both sides. It is not as though they understood it. Calvin said that he could not explain this reality. He could better experience it than understand it. But it need not be understood or explained; ". . . it is sufficient for us that Christ infuses life into our souls from the substance of his flesh, and ever infuses his own life into us, though his flesh never actually enters ours."[17]

It is necessary for accuracy to make two further remarks. One of these concerns the Holy Spirit and the other the function of human faith in the sacrament. I shall make these, plus some observations on our celebration of the Lord's Supper, in a subsequent article.

Institutes, IV, xvii, 10 (italics mine).

13. *Ibid.*, 19.

14. "De participatione carnis et sanguis Christi in sacra coena," in *Works*, Amsterdam, 1667, VIII, 744.

15. *Institutes* IV, xvii, 10.

16. *Ibid.*, 9.

17. *Ibid.*, 32.

Luther, the Fortunate

by LEONARD VERDUIN

THE film "Martin Luther" is in many ways an excellent and delightful piece of work. To see it is something of a religious experience. It is to be hoped that even he who is otherwise committed to the policy of "thumbs down" on all movies (a policy not to be dismissed lightly, because moving pictures are so often bad) will nevertheless see this one.

The film is not without its faults. It is not at all times completely correct in its representation of history—for example, it puts the great Erasmus in a place where he never was.

It stoops at one or two places to an un-called-for jab at Catholicism—the drunken wretch, justifying his shameful way of life with a flippant reference to the Indulgence he has in his hand is a case in point. This was an *abuse* in the eyes of the church as much as in anybody's. Moreover, in all fairness it could be urged that on another stairway there was probably another man, just as dead drunk—and hiding behind Luther's teachings, by a very similar abuse thereof.

"Martin Luther" is too manifestly a piece of propaganda for Lutheranism. It assigns to Martin Luther a role so prominent that one comes away with the impression that Martin Luther *was* the Reformation. Not only is he made the beginning, the middle, and the end; one also gets the impression that his was a voice in the wilderness, that he had neither companion nor colleague in his magnificent battle for reform, that, as a Reformer he was like Melchisedec—without father, without mother.

This is far from the truth. Without wishing in the least to deny Luther the importance that he undoubtedly had in the matter of the Reform, we woud like now to give the situation a bit more perspective and depth of focus. We do this not only to correct what we consider a wrong impression that "Martin Luther" is bound to make; we are led quite as much by the consideration that the same representation is not uncommon in the circles served by the *Journal*. Among us, too, Reformation-Day audiences are sometimes given to understand that when Luther nailed up his theses Europe was complacently Roman Catholic, a placid sea of orthodoxy upon the surface of which Luther caused ripples to appear, which ripples were then observed in an ever-increasing radius, even to the ends of the Empire. This is erroneous. Nothing ever happens that way. And Europe was not that sort of place in 1517.

EUROPE was seething with unrest, religious unrest, before Luther was born. It was like a dry pine forest on a hot day in mid-August and all that was needed was a spark or flame to start a fire that would then laugh at control. Pope and Emperor alike were not so ill-informed as not to know this. In fact, countermeasures had been taken to eliminate from the forest any and every one who might be plausibly suspected of carrying matches.

Let us change the figure. If the reader will tolerate a figure that is decidedly homely we would like to compare western Europe in the 16th Century to—a potato that has been lying dormant under the ground throughout the long months of winter. Such a potato has "eyes" all over its surface, any one of which can crowd to the surface at the approach of spring and so become "the" potato of the new season. But it often happens that the sprout carrying this promise runs into trouble; a late frost can nip its tender tip and so put an end to its promise; or, an abrasion caused by rough handling can blast its hope quite as effectively. In such a case the mother potato shows great resourcefulness. She has "eyes" all over her surface; and, in an incredibly short time she has put forth a new sprout. If it too meets with disaster she has still other buds ready and eager to take over.

Like the seed potato just described, Europe had sensed, with an equally mysterious intuition, for centuries prior to Luther, that spring was drawing near. She had put forth swelling buds, one after the other. But night frosts were still occurring and these had blighted more than one promising shoot. Some had been rudely squashed under the rough boot of a church that had raised up an army of men to deal rudely with any sprout that offered to raise its head. It had invented machinery that was highly efficient to this end —in the Low Countries especially there had been a highly successful Inquisition which for five hundred years had ma aged to destroy every sprout that it di trusted. There were handbooks fille with details as to how to deal with i cipient dissent, for the instruction the Inquisitors. One of these had chapter on how to "get even" with person who fled the country.

Martin Luther was not the fir sprout which the surging life of t long dormant tuber sent to the surfac Ah no. He stood in a long line of m who invested their all in very simil efforts to bring new life to the earth but who perished in the attempt.

It was Luther's good fortune to the first sprout—to keep our figure to reach the surface and find a clima sufficiently tempered to permit its su vival. In non-figurative terms, Luth was the first in the procession who w able to speak his piece and then r to cover behind Nobles of sufficie stature to shield him successfully. Wh if there had been no Frederick t Wise? What if his friends had n whisked him away to the Wartburg Or, what if this selfsame monk ha raised his head elsewhere in the E pire? What then would have been t story? The answer can be quite ca egorical—then Martin Luther wou have joined the company of a long li of men that had tried but found t odds too great against them.

What if Luther had nailed up h theses in Ghent? Or in Antwerp, Doornick? He would, for one thin have had even greater popular suppo in these parts (the first martyrs to h cause were to come from this area But he would not have lasted over fortnight.

It must not be forgotten that at a tim when the climate was relenting at la at various points (and more than any other place was it relenting in L ther's Germany) winter in all its sa age fury and murderous frost was turning to Flanders. When the E peror saw to his consternation that was no longer master in his own hou in parts of Germany, when he realiz that some of the German princes we going to challenge his unquestion sovereignty, he muttered under h breath "But in my hereditary Lo Countries there will at least be heresy!" And so successful was

t for fifty long years spring was sucsfully delayed there; not until 1560 s there any evidence that winter uld ever depart; not until *Het Wonrjaar*, 1566, does this area see its rederick"; not until the *Compromis* the Nobles was it evident that here there would be spring. It was fifty ars after 1517 before a man could ak his piece in Holland and then run cover.

WHEN one writes about history must be careful with his use of the bjunctive mood. Not what might ve been but what *was* is the histon's business. But at the cost of ofding against this good rule we wish ask: What if the sprouts pushing ward the sunlight in what is now anders had had the benefit of the latively balmy weather Luther enyed? What if the Emperor (with ready assistance of the church) and church (with the equally ready astance of the Emperor) had not for half century ground the life out of ery tender stalk that reached for the ght in Flanders? Yes, what would en have been the story? Then, the ant which now we call the Reformaon would in all likelihood have stood the southern Low Countries and not far-away and backward Germany.

For centuries prior to Luther, Flanrs had put forth Reformers only to e them crushed and frosted. A hole century, for instance, before 517 there had already been organized nti-Catholic churches in the southern ow Countries, congregations with embership lists, officers, catechism asses for prospective converts. They ood in classical or presbyterial conection with each other so that they fected pulpit exchanges. They were yptic churches, needless to say, underround churches. And they guarded eir secrecy so well that no record hatever concerning them has come own to us—save in those cases where ey were discovered and wiped out ercilessly.[1]

It is not too much to say that Flanrs had been the church's number one roblem for many centuries before the ays of Luther. In fact, one hardly nows where to begin or end, so abundant is the evidence. Because of limits of space we will put to one side all the eruptions of dissent that were of sectarian origin, i. e., were movements that took their origin *outside* the church, such movements as that of the Waldensians (who were unusually active in Flanders), the Lollards (who originated there), and the like. We shall presently speak only of dissent that came up from within the church, carried by persons who "belonged." And, to narrow our field down still further, we shall restrict ourselves by and large to rebellion within the ranks of the very order to which the great Wittenberg reformer himself belonged, the Augustinian order. We choose to dwell on this area particularly since our present purpose (i. e. to show that Luther was not the innovator popular history has made him to be) will perhaps be best served by such a plan.

More than a century before Luther, the Augustinians in Flanders had already drawn attention to themselves by their unorthodoxy. The archives of the city of Doornick (Tournay), the city that was the prolific mother of countless waves of dissent, the city that for this reason came to be known as "the Geneva of Flanders" in the 16th century, inform us, under date of 1412, that "certain monks of the order of St. Augustine have preached many sermons to the people during the lenten season just passed, and have since then discussed them publicly and in a notorious way, sermons against the honor of the church in general . . . . so causing commotion and casting the hearts of the common people into great uncertainty, and, worse still, into certain weighty errors against the holy doctrine of the Apostles." A brace of notables from the University of Paris was dispatched to Doornick to investigate and put the people back into the right track; and the citizenry was admonished in the meantime not to allow their minds to be stirred up by the preaching of the heretical Augustinians.[2]

What was the outcome of this eruption of dissent is not known. We do know however that a few years later an Augustinian monk by the name of Nicholas Serrurier had to be taken in hand for heresy. He was a native of Flanders and attached to the church of Notre Dame in Doornick. He and a few of his fellow Augustinians had volunteered to go on an assignment to counteract the activities of a group of Waldensians who were active in the vicinity. Whether they acted in good faith in this self-imposed assignment or whether it was that they had discovered in their own souls an affinity for the doctrines of the Waldensians and therefore wanted to be with them is hard to say; but certain it is that almost immediately they were found to be preaching the very doctrines they were supposed to uproot. Serrurier, who seems to have been the leader of the group, was apprehended, jailed, and forced to appear at the Council of Constance. A lofty scaffold had been built for his *preschement*, a sort of public and official denunciation. A paper on which his errors were written was handed to him and he was asked to recant them—much the same procedure as that adopted a century later with Luther. The good man contended that he was unable to read the fine script "having lost one eye in the prison." Two candles were brought to facilitate his reading; but he still was unable to read what had been written. Thereupon a certain licentiate, named Peter de Lamburga, was drafted to read the document "*alta et intelligibili voce.*" Twenty-eight items of heresy were listed. Under pressure Serrurier recanted. He was nevertheless sentenced to lifelong banishment. If he violated this edict of expulsion, he was told, a much more grievous sentence would be pronounced and he would be "handed over to the secular arm." His heretical theses were burned in the public square, among them the assertion "that God does not forgive and cannot forgive sins except with foregoing penitence" and "that prayer ought to be made to God alone and not to the saints."

Serrurier's repudiation of errors seems not to have come from his heart (there are techniques, as we have lately witnessed, to make a man confess just about anything his tormentors desire). A few years later the Pope wrote a letter, dated March 16, 1424, and addressed to the Inquisitor Orric de Torrente, instructing him to see that the sentence pronounced in the eventuality of a relapse be executed against Serrurier. His Holiness gave evidence of being irked because those whose duty it was to liquidate Serrurier were so distressingly slow. From another let-

1. Most of the details of one such group re transcribed, from the archives of Atrecht (Arras), Douai, and other contemporary ources, in Paul Fredericq's *Corpus Documentorum Inquisitionis* . . . Vol. III, p. 56ff.

2. The pertinent archives have been printed *inter alia* by A. Cauchie, in *Analectes pour servir a l'histoire ecclesiastique de la Belgique*, Ser. II, Vol. VIII, (1893) p. 265f.

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ter by this Pope, Martin V., we know that Surrurier was in prison in Lausanne. Martin V resorted to every device known to him to get the secular and the ecclesiastical heads *to do their duty in the matter.*[3]

One can hardly keep from speculating as to what might have come of this affair with Serrurier if he had had the benefit of the political asylum into which Luther could retreat in his day.

COMING to the year 1451 we find another Augustinian, named Jehan Marliere pining away in the prison of the bishop of Atrecht (Arras) "because of the fact that he had put forward error as he preached." This man had also recanted under torture but had already spent seven years in his dungeon nevertheless. The city of Rijssel (Lillie) near by, at one time allowed a reimbursement for alms for this Marliere.[4]

Very frequently men who rebelled against the monopolistic pretensions of the church found comfort and assistance with representatives of the Order of St. Augustine. We recall how the Waldensians of Serrurier's time found in him a trustworthy and loyal friend; and it is well known that dissenters from Bohemia flocked to Luther, seeking and finding a most sympathetic ear. So also in the case of Edo (or Epo) of Haarlem; he had a "colleague if not a disciple" in the Augustinian of Amsterdam, Nicolaas van Naarden.

This Edo lived a very exemplary life. He had many books translated into Dutch, which he read in secret gatherings, and so he made many disciples. He read from the Bible to them and expounded what he read. Among his errors were the assertion that Mary had other children after Jesus her firstborn, and the denial of "*triplicem esse adorationem, videlicet: latrie, dulye, et uperdulye.*"[5] He held that one can pray just as well in a common house as in a church, seeing that God is omnipresent. He taught that men should not pray to Mary, nor to any saint.

When Nicolaas of Naarden heard that his friend Edo was in trouble he went to Haarlem to help him—only to be arrested himself and brought before the Inquisitor. After the usual pressures both men were ready to recall their errors. Their recantation took place before a large crowd in the city square, with the two accused men raised high on a scaffold where all could see them. A great company of men of the cloth were on hand, as also "the mayor and his council and aldermen in order that the two may by them be burned if they remain obstinate." After a two hour *preschement* the men on trial were given the floor—but not to argue their case, not any more than Luther, or John Hus before him—but to recant, or else. They were asked simply "*Numquid tu hoc dixisti?*" And they answer, meekly, *Dixi, sed male.*" Thereupon Edo is forbidden ever to go outside of Haarlem and he must not presume again to teach anybody. Moreover he must wear "a yellow cross stitched upon his tunic before and behind" and he is ordered to stand before the whole assembly every time the Gospel was preached, with a candle in his hand. His colleague, the Augustinian, was forbidden to perform his priestly functions and certain acts of penance are prescribed for him.

Edo had the good fortune to die of the pest that very year; his friend of the Order of Augustine outlived him by many years.[6]

It was figures like these, then, like Nicholas Serrurier, Edo of Haarlem and Nicolaas van Naarden, who were the probing sprouts of a vital spirit of Reform. There were others, as we shall indicate next time. They ran into foul weather in Flanders. But their efforts testify that the Reformation did not spring, complete and full-orbed, from the single mind of Martin Luther.

3. Most of the pertinent documents on Serrurier have been brought together in Paul Fredericq's *Corpus Documentorum Inquisitionis . . .* and can be readily located with the help of the Index in Volume III. See under "Nicolaas Serrurier."

4. The entry is printed in Fredericq's *Corpus*, cited earlier, Vol. iii, p. 85.

5. The rebellion in Flanders was always inspired first of all by a denial of the miracle of the mass and an angry rebuke for the idolatry that resulted from this doctrine. There had been a chorus of protest against these things for five hundred years prior to Luther. Contemporary witness speaks of movements counting adherents by close to one hundred thousands, as early as 1100. The *forte* of the Reformation protest in these parts remained the denial of Transsubstantiation until long after Luther. It was this smouldering resentment against the idolatry engendered by the miracle of the mass that touched off the Iconoclasm in the Low Countries in the 16th Century. The church tried to circumvent the argument by taking refuge in the distinction of *latreia, douleia,* and *hyperdouleia* — which distinction the two men perceived to be an indefensible fabrication.

6. Text of the contemporary chronicle in Fredericq's *Corpus*, I, p. 337ff.

In 1503, when Martin Luther had been at Erfurt for two years, and was twenty years old, he discovered a Bible one day in the library of the university. Never before had he seen a complete Bible, and how thrilled he was! He was amazed to find that there was far more in it than the portions of scriptures selected for services of the church, and the first gleam of new light arose in his mind, although as yet it was only his intellect and imagination that was reached. Yet, the Reformation lay in that discovery! —(*Luther's Anecdotes,* Macaulay, 1883).

In 1534, when he published his translation of the Bible in the German language, the people turned to it eagerly, buying thousands of copies. "Even shoemakers, women, and ignorant people who have learned only a little German, are eagerly reading the New Testament as the fountain of all truth, and that, moreover, with such frequency that they know it by heart," complained a certain Romanist. "They carry it about in their pockets, and in this way conceive in a few weeks such a high opinion of their knowledge that they dispute not only with Catholic laymen, but with priests and monks, and even with doctors of theology, about faith and the gospel."

—(*A History of Education,* F. V. N. Painter, 1886).

An Amphibolous Solution

by PETER L. VAN DYKEN

An evaluation of the Report of the Study Committee in regard to Divorce and marriage to Synod 1954.

A STUDY COMMITTEE, consisting six ministers of the Gospel, was apnted by the Synod of 1952 to:

a. Examine the exegetical founda- for the thesis that divorced people second marriage are "living in conual adultery."

b. To see if there are legitimate sons why such a second marriage uld be continued.

c. If the committee cannot substante the "contention of point *a*, it ll draw a reversal of the decisions of 52.

The Study Committee has taken commitment seriously and has deavored to find a solution for point for which reason point *c* falls out. The Committee at the very beginning mits that "no text or texts can be nd which directly and clearly supt - - - - the statement in question, e., that unbiblical divorce and rriage constitute a continual living adultery." The members assume that texts can be found either to refute e statement in question. After admitg that they can find no direct quotaon from Scripture to prove their point, ey undertake to prove by inference d cumulative evidence that the posion of 1952 is correct.

Taking Matt. 19:9 as their key text om which to draw their conclusions, eir first statement is that "it is the *arriage* which is the committing of lultery" (italics mine). I cannot see w any one can disagree with that atement. The texts (four quotations) ainly say that. (It is the taking of nother woman, and *being married to r* which is called *committing adulry.*)

From the statement above the Comittee draws the inference that "it is erefore an adulterous marriage, not st an adulterous act, but continued dulterous relationship."

Is THIS inference correct and arranted? How do you define an adulterous marriage"? That expresion is a contradiction in terms. If a econd marriage is an established marriage it is not a continual living in adultery. If a man and woman live in continual adultery (usually called common-law co-habitation), it is not a marriage. It cannot be both. Water cannot at the same time be wet and dry, neither can fire be hot and cold at the same time.

The Committee's definition of a "continual living in adultery" is derived from the mistaken meaning of the word *marriage.*

Marriage (any marriage) does not begin with the first cohabitation. That act, as well as any subsequent ones and as well as all other privileges and duties, is the normal result which follows the marriage and which consummates and confirms it and is entirely legitimate in itself. But the marriage is begun when the minister of God in the realm of civil life *pronounces a couple man and wife.* The sin therefore consists in the seeking of another partner and in *being joined together by a legal action.* And though by that civil act it has become an establishd union, the legality of it does not counteract or whitewash the sin of it. That sin remains until it is repented of and confessed. The legitimate functions of married life do not establish the sin, nor do they add to it.

The Committee does not take that position in consideration. They by-pass the civil authority entirely, which makes them come to the conclusion that the sin began with the first intimate relation and is continued by subsequent acts. Their reasoning is based on the wrong conception of when the marriage is taking place and what it is.

With that also falls the claim of some others who would assert that the sin of adultery ends after the first intimate relation. That view, as well as the reasoning of the Committee lowers the essential meaning of marriage to a mere fleshly relationship and would make any act of cohabitation a marriage.

This last is not a new idea; it is already presented as such in the Minority Report on this matter at the Synod of 1934. This certainly is not the scriptural esteem of marriage.

God said at the beginning: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." From this divine statement it is evident, that they shall be one flesh, *after they have become man and wife.* This cannot be reversed as to mean that to be one flesh makes them become man and wife. God himself brought the first bride to the bridegroom to become his wife. And ever after that there must be a performance of giving in marriage and of pronouncing them man and wife, before there can be any legitimate intimate intercourse.

THE POSITION recently advanced in the Netherlands as if the engagement constitutes the core of marriage and should give unlimited privileges and liberties between the two parties is altogether wrong and unbiblical. That is a case of joining yourself to a woman, instead of *being joined* by the proper authority. Without the proper legal action any intimate relation, whether as an engaged couple or as living with a common-law wife, is *a life of adultery.*

Scripture quotes a clear case of the difference between mere cohabitation and marriage in the story of the Samaritan woman. She had had five husbands (whether they all died or she was divorced from any of them is not stated), but the one *she had now was not her husband*, which constitutes a clear case of adulterous cohabitation. In the light of this it is marvelous that Jesus should offer her "to drink of the living water if she should ask it, which living water should become in her a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

The Study Committee presents the view of those who differ with their view as claiming "that the adultery of the unmarried person makes the previous divorce valid." Possibly some still hold that opinion. At the time it was the opinion of the majority of the study committee of 1934, and also of the Hoeksama-Sjaarda Report of 1936. But certainly not all hold that opinion now. Already in 1936 in the overture which I submitted to that Synod I had stated that it is the "legal divorce which has effectually put asunder that which God

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had joined together" (*Agenda*, 1936, part II). In subsequent protests (1945, '46 and '48) I constantly affirmed that "a legal divorce breaks the marriage tie before God and man." And in the report of the Study Committee in regard to my protest of 1948 that position has been substantiated by four of its five members. Certainly there can be no second marriage unless the first one be broken. It is therefore not the second marriage that breaks the first one, but the legal divorce does. If any one holds that at some stage of the married life the sinfulness of this relationship automatically terminates and becomes legitimate. he would obscure and minimize the sin which had been committed in taking a second wife.

BUT IS THERE no proof at all in Scripture that a second marriage, which is called "a committing of adultery," is nevertheless an established marriage and not a "continual living in adultery"?

In Matt. 19:9 Jesus says: "If a man shall *marry another* - - -, he that *marrieth her* - - -." In both cases Jesus calls it a marriage in contrast to the case of the Samaritan woman. The same is said in Deut. 24: After the one husband has divorced his wife. she may go and *be another man's wife.* In all four texts in the gospels as well as in Deut. the position is called a marriage. And whereas Scripture calls it a *marriage*, it cannot be a continual living in adultery. The one excludes the other.

The Committee properly stresses the holiness of the marriage bond. Then they ask: Are there any exceptions? And further: "Does Scripture anywhere permit *this* exception that the act of entering upon an adulterous marriage sets one free from the requirements of marriage so that the very adultery ceases to be adulterous"?

And the answer must be an emphatic: *No.* The sinfulness remains. But it is *not prolonged* by any functions of normal family life. Neither does the normal family life *exempt* any party from the sin committed. Only a heartfelt sorrow for and confession of that sin can do that and has done that in many instances.

From this it follows that an alteration in the marriage relationship not only is unnecessary but would be *positively sinful*, since that would in a measure be another breaking of the marriage bond.

* * *

IT IS the conclusion of the Committee that the 1952 decision should be retained.

The Committee also has attempted to answer the question whether parties in second marriage which they have branded as a continual living in adultery should nevertheless continue in that relationship.

The question is therefore whether a husband and wife shall continue to live as husband and wife or whether they shall "cease to live" as husband and wife. The 1952 decision demands that they must die maritally before they can be recognized as living spiritually. It demands of them a marital suicide. For when you "cease to live" you are dead.

And the Committee sustains this oblique decision. They *admit* that there can be "ethical involvements or circumstances" (which is an abbreviation of the word marriage) which make it impossible to sever the marriage relation and commit marital suicide. They admit that in some cases it may be impossible, but leave the validity of the reasons to the parties involved. Only they forget to mention the main factor, why they cannot (and must not) separate, namely because of the marriage vow which has been made, and which has been legally confirmed, by which they have become man and wife before God and man, and which tie must neither be broken nor set at nought.

What would the Committee do with these people? They admit that one or both of the parties may be "genuinely repentant," but they claim that they cannot be "fully repentant" as long as they remain alive as a married couple. What is the distinction between "genuinely repentant" and "fully repentant"? That is the *amphiboly* of their solution, which as a matter of fact is no solution at all. It is merely *a way out* of a difficulty which they dare not face. They state that in their opinion "the *solution of this difficulty* is to be found in the fact that *man cannot solve it.*" They would exclude them from the table of the Lord though they allow the possibility that the Lord will overrule the obstructions that the Church sets up. They lower the meaning of the keys of the kingdom of heaven to a mere form. They would admonish the Church to express a special measure of spiritual care for these people. But to admit them to the table of the Lord? No indeed. Be very affectionate to them, but be sure to have rubber gloves on when you contact them. Let there remain a well defined division between them and other repentant sinners that the Church is made up of. The blood of Christ is insufficient to wash away the redness of their sin.

Did God not foresee the occurrence of such positions? Or did He give us in the case of David an example of how they are to be solved?

Considering that no married couple (in second marriage) normally will consent to commit marital suicide, except possibly those who would use the admonition and demand of the Church as a convenient excuse for breaking a tie which had proved to be far from happy, and for that breaking receive the benediction of the Church, the conclusion of the matter is that the Church has *in essence* not left the position of 1890 and 1908, and that the Report of the present Study Committee would uphold and confirm that position.

"Let no one say to himself, There have been troubles in our fathers' time but not in ours. If thou thinkest thyself not to have troubles, thou hast not yet begun to be a Christian . . . If thou sufferest not any persecution for Christ, take heed lest thou hast not yet begun to live godly in Christ. But when thou hast begun to live godly in Christ, thou hast entered the wine press; prepare thyself for the pressings, but be thou not dry, lest from the pressing nothing come forth." —Augustine

LETTERS TO THE JOURNAL

Concerning the Committee on Labor

I am prompted to write and to request a little space in your next issue which, I trust, is to appear before Synod convenes. Your publishing of the article "Confusion On the Union Issue" which appeared in last month's *Journal* occasions my request. As chairman of the Committee criticised in that article, and the writer, I should like to make a few observations which I believe his criticism and attempt at solution of the problem suggest. I do appreciate that the article appeared in sufficient time before Synod so that one might reply to it if so inclined. This is much better than was done with the Majority Report on Labor by another writer last year.

All honor to anyone who can bring order where there is confusion even when it means criticizing our Committee. Surely if it will help to clarify the "confusion on the Labor Issue" or labelling our Committee or its actions, we welcome the labels of those who see clearly and judge uprightly. A command of adjectives under such circumstances no doubt merits applause. We would not rise to debate the labelling but we would like to suggest that had the writer thought through the last paragraph of his "preface" before writing the criticism he might well have conserved paper and printer's ink. This paragraph brings forward his more charitable judgment. This subconscious sense of responsibility as a member of the Synod, which appointed our Committee to this Mandate, although it asserted itself a little belatedly, would not be denied, and would thus help us better to understand him as a reasonable person. The paragraph is as follows: "perhaps Synod's Committee did the best it could under the circumstances." If assurance of this fact is necessary allow me to assure the public and the writer that Synod's Committee did not procrastinate, but "did its best under the circumstances."

I believe the writer in his conclusion is correct when he states that Synod should face up to the reports presented by the Minority and the Majority in 1953. Synod should try carefully to discern the issue and not allow it to be obscured. Synod should understand the reasoning which is basic to that of the Minority as well as that which is basic to that of the Majority. There is a matter of the Church and its Boards and their responsibility to each other here as well as a matter of a "legal entity before the state." The article in question makes no contribution to clarifying this issue.

A Basic Essential to a Proper Solution

This essential is suggested by the brother's criticism of the Committee for its failure to allow the Consistories sufficient time to properly study the matters contained in the Questionnaire and the matter of the formulation of one of the questions. Thus the time element and the matter of properly drawing up Mandates. Mistakes will happen when Synod is busy. They will never be entirely ruled out, but the time which a Consistory and the delegates will need in coming to decisions will to a large extent be dependent upon the alertness and preparedness of both. The article points up a weakness which begins in the Consistories and among the Ministers.

Let us ask and answer the question, To whom did the Committee send its materials? To strangers who are not acquainted with the labor problem of the Christian Reformed Church? No! To the Consistories who already for years have been urged by Synods to know the relationships into which the members of the flock over which they have the oversight have entered. This would and did specifically include labor organizations. It was furthermore sent to Consistories who have been urged to promote Christian Organizations in family visiting and otherwise. It would seem that Consistories which have done this would have very little difficulty in answering any question which might be put to them. Consider now that each year these Consistories receive the *Acts* of Synod at the same time that the Committee members do of all committees. Have these Consistories acquainted themsedves with the field to the best of their ability? Do they know the nature of the organizations of which their people are members? We repeatedly assert that disciplinary action belongs to the Consistory, but how can it proceed if they do not know? Some Consistories are in rural areas and some in industrial areas. We might suppose that those in rural areas do not feel the problem because it is at a distance. Can this be said of those in industrial areas?

Although this characterization could be more detailed, it seems sufficient to say that Synod is composed of representatives of these men. These are the men who must do the judging. By and large our men are agreed that Christian principles must be formulated as guiding principles for all fields of endeavor. At least that is our boast. One would expect that, where feasible, men should act not only individually but corporately. This seems to be the logical conclusion. The question remains, When ought they to act corporately as Christians and when only individually? A further question remains, Where and how shall they act individually and or corporately? When shall men act in distinct organizations, and when "as a cell" within other organizations? "Cells," in which some see so much hope and salvation for the future, are not individuals working alone; they are groups of two or more working for specific goals, by definite methods and according to a spirit of life. But how can there be "cells," if there is no parent organization? If there is a parent organization what responsibility does a church, which believes in it, have to back it up? How shall it do this? These are questions before Synod. If not so stated yet they are inherent in the issue.

Thus we come back to the Consistories who must help prepare delegates for Synod, for, how shall Synod resolve the questions if the delegates who come are not posted on the matters within their own Classis? Where shall these begin? At Synod? Perhaps. These same delegates must assist in the formulation of the decisions. They do not all have to be able to write them but they must judge them.

By the very nature of the constituency of Synod some will excell in certain fields and others in other fields. Yet such an issue as this, which is of a crucial nature because of its repeated appearance at Synod, is deserving of careful attention by everyone. Synods may multiply their decisions and add rule upon rule but only men who know the rules and are prepared for decisions will make for an efficient Synod which sees clearly, acts promptly and writes Mandates carefully.

Rev. Peter Holwerda

Lansing, Illinois,
May 14, 1954.

Letters to the Journal — Continued

Concerning "The Christian Duty Toward Society"

Under this heading the Journal published a statement of the Christian social objective, to which, no doubt, determined opposition will arise from the part of those who have ever read something about Christian social action. It is really incomprehensible that this could have been written as it neglects fully everything which has been published in this field for more than a century, which is by no means little. In fact, the writer's picture of the Christian's social task (is this a deliberate change of the expression Christian Social task) has in my opinion been wrongly drawn and is in urgent need of being redrawn. To which end the following picture may be useful.

When I read the article to which I referred above, my thoughts wandered to the first phrases of a book, which started by putting the question, "What is Christian social?" and answered the question as follows:

"The German 'Kaiser' once answered this question shortly and clearly: 'Christian social is nonsense'." (Christelijk Sociale Studiën, Dr. J. R. Slotemaker de Bruine.)

The answer given by the writer of the article in "The Reformed Journal" seems to differ little from that given by the German "Kaiser," in that he states: "The social goal, (that is) the maintenance of the common life of our present society." Everyone has that same goal and every one can perform this task. Why then talk about Christian social? Why then "assume that the Christian is the only one who can perform this task."

"The non-Christian, too, does what is needful for the life of our present world."

In other words: "Christian Social is nonsense."

Dr. J. S. Slotemaker de Bruine is of another opinion and his words, written more than 40 years ago, have inspired thousands and thousands of workers. These words have communicated themselves to churches and to Christian men and are still up to date now. In the memorandum issued by the Study Department World Council of Churches in Preparation for the Second Assembly (1954) entitled: Social Questions—the responsible society in a World Perspective, it reads on page 10: "The very riches of the modern world demand fresh Christian thinking about the relationship between material goods and the Christian life."

And here is the answer to the question: "What is Christian-social" given by Dr. Slotemaker de Bruine:

"What is the true reason why we exert ourselves to strengthen the weak, to forbear the ruin of those perishing, but to lift them up if possible . . . . ? Only the preaching of the Cross of Christ can provide for help; the preaching of Him, Who, for the salvation of the lost ones and the redemption of those in bonds sacrificed His own blissful life for the disgrace of the Cross. There is the fireplace for a true social strength.

"Because this is what matters: in the preceding pages nothing has been demanded that is new for Christianity; and for the display of the social force not a single outside element has to be added. What is necessary is simply that it becomes what it is.

"To promote this purification in all our spiritual and social life, in the individuals, in the churches, throughout our people—to work for the renewal of our existence as a people by the power of Jesus Christ—to seek the liberation of the bound and the lifting up of the sunken, not only in the way of charity, but in that of justice especially—to work for the display of the forces of the Gospel — to hanker after the Glory of God, anywhere, that is Christian Social."

Now what is the striking difference between these words on the one hand, and the description of the Social Goal given in "The Reformed Journal"?

As I see it, the difference is that Dr. George Stob includes in his statement only the Creation and the destruction of the world, whereas Dr. Slotemaker de Bruine, and hundreds of thousands with him, also know of a *redeemed* world. The difference is that Dr. George Stob has apparently been struck by the idea, that we live in a lost world, whereas those who believe in Christian Social Action believe that we live in a redeemed world. Dr. Stob apparently does not expect much from the Cross of Christ and His Resurrection for our present world and for social life, whereas the Christian social ideals are based upon and inspired by faith in the power of the Cross. Therefore, how could Dr. Stob write:

" . . . . it seems hardly right, even as a counsel of perfection, that we could intend more with this world and its life than God intends," if, as I believe with my whole heart and I hope Dr. Stob also does, that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Our intentions with the world will and can never be higher than God's intention who sacrificed His only begotten Son for it.

Dr. Stob doesn't see any other aim for this world but to preserve what we have in it: a complete materialistic aim which is also the aim of the neutral unions; the maintenance of the common life—whereas Christian Social Action intends to follow the footsteps of Jesus Christ, Who not only healed the sick but also preached the Gospel. Dr. Stob certainly wishes to heal the sick and he also wishes to preach the Gospel. However, he makes a sharp distinction. The healing of the sick is the duty of mankind. It has nothing to do with Christian faith. The preaching of the Gospel is the duty of the Church—it has nothing to do with social life.

Clinging to the preservation of this present world he does not see the connection with the redemption and restoration to God through Christ. He says: "they are different things."

As I see it, this opinion is closely related to a heresy, which came up in the church of the early days of Christianity (Gnosticism) which separated the spiritual from the material and valued the first much higher than the latter. The material things are necessary, there is no doubt about that, but—Dr. Stob says—they have been set for destruction. Well, if that is true, the Christian has no other aim than the preservation of these things as long as they are indispensable for human life. He can do that with the godless in one organization, because there is no higher aim.

Very logical indeed!

However, if it is true, as I believe it is, that the Creation has been redeemed and the Kingdom of God has come, the Christian will relate the material things to God in Jesus Christ. They have been sanctified by God revealed in the flesh. He cannot, therefore, consider the material things as neutral and of less importance, but will use them and deal

n them to the Glory of God in Jesus ist.

o what purpose?

Not to build a new earth on which nteousness dwells, because that will brought down from heaven by d in the fullness of time, but to ct signs of that Kingdom in this rld, that the world may see them l believe. "For we wrestle not inst flesh and blood, but against ncipalities, against powers, against rulers of the darkness of this world, inst spiritual wickedness in high ces." (Ephesians 6:12)

So, what is good? The lax definition en by Dr. Stob certainly does not justice to this word. If there is some od even in the wicked, I have learned eady in the catechism class that such od has no value before God. God y work with this kind of good for own ends. That—let me say it rectfully—is up to Him. That is not us to judge. But it has certainly been given us as a standard. The ndard set by Dr. Stob, viz. that, beuse God uses the "civil" good of godss men, should induce us to *follow* se men (that is to join a neutral ion) is nowhere to be found in the iptures. Jesus Christ set for his disles and for us another standard.

Dr. Stob says: "And there is reason believe that it is right to co-operate a common social task with those om God has commandeered for and powered to a needful service for s world and its life."

However, how do I know that God s commandeered for and empowered em? What is the measuring-rod Dr. ob would use?

I know only of one measuring-rod: e Word of God.

It says: "Ye shall know them by eir fruits" (Math. 7:16)

What are the fruits of the neutral ions?

First of all they have led the workers tray from the church and from reion. Further they have led them to mmunism and they do so today.

The C.I.O. was one of the labor ornizations, which volunteered to eblish the World Federation of Trade nions in 1944 and to take part in its oard, yea helped to elect the General ecretary (Saillant) who was and is a cognized Communist, receiving his structions from Moscow. They saw eir mistake when it was too late and e millions of workers of Asia were ought under Communistic domination. A new International Federation was set up, the International Federation of Free Trade Unions (in which also the A.F.L. took part) to which all the large socialistic labor unions of Europe are affiliated. May I ask Dr. Stob whether they have done so "according to the grace that is given them"? Or did they rather abuse the gifts of God? In order to establish their own power?

There is no common aim between the neutral unions and Christian unions except on sub-ordinated well outlined points. The principal aims are completely different. The neutral unions strive for higher wages, better working conditions. They have certainly achieved results in this respect. However, at what price?

At the price of the souls of large numbers of members. At the price of the rights and the freedom of those workers, who are not convinced but forced to join. At the price of a disrupted society, for which the employers are likewise to blame and which calls for government measures to check the power on both sides, which is often used for selfish purposes.

Dr. Stob approves that the C.L.A. is willing to co-operate with neutral unions in working for the removal of racial discrimination in society. Has Dr. Stob the opinion that these neutral unions will also be prepared to co-operate with the C.L.A.? He should know better! They are prepared to accept the affiliation of Christian men in *their* unions and on *their* principles. Complete surrender is all they ask for. Is that acceptable for a Christian?

Therefore, which one is exclusive? The C. L. A. or the other unions?

However, Dr. Stob supports neutrality and, therefore, opposes Christian organization. He is of the opinion you don't need the Bible in social action. Either he neglects that the Bible is full of social implications, or he believes that a Christian is able to bring these principles to bear in a non-Christian union. For the latter he cannot be blamed too much because he has never had the opportunity to try it.

However, as a scholar he should know that it is irresponsible to send isolated soldiers with the weapons of the original natives of this country (bow and string) into battle in a modern war. He should also know that the big struggle between the powers of Satan and the redeeming power of Jesus Christ is being fought nowadays in the social field. He should, therefore, know that it is irresponsible to send a plain worker with nothing more than he learned in the catechism class into the modern war between the philosophies of their time.

What is most grievous, however, is Dr. Stob's insinuation with regard to the C.L.A. He writes: "And if, by improbable circumstances (what is the use of suggesting improbable circumstances?) the C.L.A. should become the dominant labor organization, there would be brought into society the reverse of the mark of the beast—non-Christians would be starved out of the world or be forced to live by the charity of Christians, unless they should imitate, in reverse, some early Christians and produce a formal certificate of belief in the Christian God."

Blind for the *fact* that neutral unions *are* starving Christians out of their jobs (and still advocating to join them) he *insinuates* that Christian unions *might* do so, for which there is not a splinter of evidence in the world, and which, besides, would be in flagrant contradiction to their very principles. This is no longer argumentation.

It is abundantly clear that Dr. Stob has made up his mind in favor of neutral labor unions and that a further discussion is useless, unless he produces the goodwill to study the Christian social movement before writing further articles as referred to above, which, to say the best of it, show a complete ignorance of the principles of the practice of the Christian social movement.

F. P. Fuykschot

Hamilton, Ontario
May 13, 1954

Concerning Scholarships

The article, "Sponsorship or Scholarship?" interested me because it touches upon a subject which I feel needs study. Student Aid is an important matter both for our students and students from foreign lands. I believe some uniform system should be worked out for broad benefit. I was much pleased that Rev. Bruinooge pointed out that "our school is to equip everybody, whether scientist, musician, teacher or minister." Thus I feel it is a mistake when our effort is to support only ministerial or missionary work. But how could we finance the world and life view of a realistic Calvinism? How would it be possible to provide funds for the education of dentists, nurses and school

teachers as well as ministers and missionaries? Perhaps we should do away with the Student Aid fund as we have it today.

To replace the Student Aid Fund that we have in various Classes, I would like to see a large revolving fund available to all students with the requirement that aid received should be paid back in full. Student aid should not be a dole. Instead of proving financial inability, scholastic ability and physical capability there should be one SIBBOLETH — agreement to repay in full the amount received. The privilege to receive financial aid would be granted to those who would assume the responsibility to repay and thus would be provided a revolving fund for students in the future. Some plan of repayment should be worked out based upon earnings with little or no interest charged for the aid received.

The requirement to prove financial inability gives unfair privileges to paupers. Scholarship and health standards should also be abolished. This may seem drastic, but why? Perhaps because we have imbibed something of the Nietzche spirit. Scripture makes mention of the services of the week. On what basis would we withhold our Calvinistic education from the physically weak or the one-talented?

When I think of scholarship demands: school grades, health reports and character references that must be submitted—I like to think of the men who worked in Bible times. How about the disciples of Jesus? What chance would any of them have had before a Board of Trustees if the Student Fund was low? Timothy had a weak stom ach. Paul had a defect of which h was very conscious. Peter was an im pulsive, perhaps ignorant, fisherma James and John were "hot-heads"—a least Jesus referred to them as sons o thunder. Matthew might have been ac cepted but he was a publican. Perhap Judas Iscariot alone would have qua ified for a scholarship.

When young people start in busines they need credit. Why not set up vast fund for student credit, for th healthy and the weak, for the intellec tuals and those that are not. Let u make the best education available fo all those who desire it that they ma prepare to serve our Lord how an where He wills.

Sincerely yours,
C. L. VANZEE

Hancock, Minn.
May 13, 1954

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